SEA LIFE IN FUERTEVENTURA

White sea bream

Sargo

Diplodus sargus cadenati

Up to 45cm

Most common sea bream, present almost everywhere. Form small shoals of different sized individuals that will often follow snorkellers

Annular sea bream

Mojarra

Diplodus annularis

Up to 24cm

Smaller than white sea bream, usually found on sandy bottoms and sea-grass beds

Zebra sea bream

Sargo breado

Diplodus cervinus cervinus

Up to 55cm

Largest commonly encountered sea bream. Small shoals and pairs often found over rocky and mixed bottoms. Smaller specimens more brightly coloured and found closer to the shore

2-banded sea bream

Seifo

Diplodus vulgaris

Up to 45cm

Common and easily recognised species, found over all bottoms.
Usually seen alone or in pairs, juveniles group together in mixed shoals along with other sea breams. Rarely larger than 20cm

Striped sea bream

Herrera

Lithognathus mormyrus

Up to 55cm

2Elongated silver bream with numerous fine pale stripes. Can grow quite large, but shoals of smaller examples are more likely to be encountered. Tend to hug the bottom. Characteristic fleshy, white lips

Salema porgy

Salema

Sarpa salpa

Up to 30cm

Common - form large uniform schools close to the shore.

Distinctive fine yellow stripes. In bright light, can appear blue.

Can produce frightening hallucinations in minutes if eaten

Bastard grunt

Roncadore

Pomadasys incisus

Up to 40cm

Common species. Local name means “snorer” due to the audible noises it makes when caught. Large shoals often found close to the shore, unafraid of snorkellers

Bogue

Boga

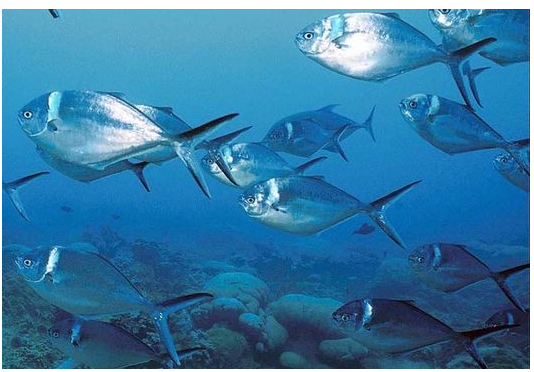
Boops boops

Up to 35cm

Very common species, can assume almost plague proportions in some areas. Rarely eaten as it is traditionally considered a dirty fish that feeds on the corpses of fishermen

Pompano, Palometa

Palometa
Trachinotus goodie
Up to 50cm



Distinctive black thin tailfins. Mature fish also have thin black upper and lower dorsal fins

Parrot fish

Vieja

Spaisoma cretense, Scarus cretensis

Up to 70cm

Female brightly coloured, male drab greyish brown. juveniles often alone, larger fish in groups. Feed over rocky bottoms, beak-like teeth

Red mullet

Salmonete

Mullus barbatus

Up to 33cm

Red stripes and distinctive barbels

Grey mullet, golden mullet

Galupe, Lisa

Liza aurata

Up to 59cm

Long and thin with distinctive white lips, more grey than golden

Black damsel fish

Fula negra

Abudefduf luridus

Up to 14cm

Small but spectacular, found almost everywhere especially over rocky and weedy bottoms in shallow water. Bright blue colour and trusting nature. Males develop orange patches during the breeding season

Band-tail chromis

Fula blanca

Chromis limbatus

Up to 15cm

Can form large schools in open water above rocky bottoms.

Males develop purple backs during the breeding season.

A common species

One of the few species to thrive over rocks infested with sea urchins

Peacock wrasse

Pejeverde

Thalassoma pavo

Up to 22cm

Common, often found in mixed shoals with the Black Damsel Fish and Band-Tail Chromis. Found everywhere except over pure sand bottoms, from the inter-tidal zone down to the deep sea. Males are larger than female (in pic) with more distinctive colouration

Flounder

Tapaculo

Bothus podas maderensis

Up to 25cm

Common on sandy bottoms, ssp endemic to the Canaries and Madeira. Small specimens seen in shallow water close to beaches. Local name means “buttock cover”

Moray eel

Morena comun

Muraena helena

Up to 150cm

Very variable in colour. Hides in, and peers out of, holes

Ray

Raya

Raja sp

200cm or more

Numerous species of ray can be found, often concealed on sandy bottoms. Occasionally large manta rays come into harbours in search of food, particularly at night

Short-snouted sea horse

Caballito del mar

Hippocampus hippocampus

Up to 13cm

Very rarely seen, hides amongst sea grass

Rock goby

Bobi

Gobius paganellus

Up to 12cm

Familiar fish of most rock pools and shallow sea

Common blenny

Blennio, barriguda

Lipophrys pholis

Up to 13cm

No tentacles above eyes, continuous dorsal fin; the first dorsal fins spiny and the remainder soft. Pectoral fins relatively large

Montagu’s blenny

Moma

Coryphoblennius galerita

Up to 7cm

Similar to common blenny but with small tentacles over the eyes

Rubber eye, redlip blenny

Barriguda moras

Ophioblennius atlanticus atlanticus

Up to 20cm

Largest of the gobies and blennies, recognised by its cream head and almost black body.

Populations can be quite dense on exposed rocky bottoms covered with sea urchins and in harbours

Triplefin

Bavosa morruda

Trypterygion tripteronotus

Up to 5cm

Tiny but spectacular blenny found in pairs in shallow water over rocky bottoms. Male has black head and orange body. Female plain. Pugnacious - can attack fingers

Common shrimp

Quisquilla
Palaemon elegans

Tiny specimens near shore nibble toes. One of the few shrimps active in the daytime

Octopus

Pulpo

Octopus vulgaris

Up to 25cm, tentacles to 100cm

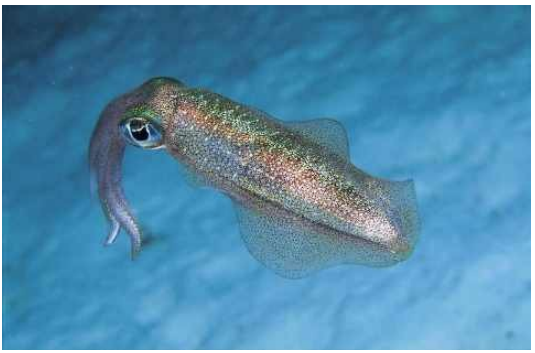
Generally hidden in rock crevices during the day

Squid

Calamar de pota

Loligo vulgaris

Up to 75cm



Grey semi-transparent sometimes with a reddish tinge. Transparent triangular fins. Large eyes. Swims tentacles first

Cuttlefish

Choco

Sepia officinalis

Up to 45cm

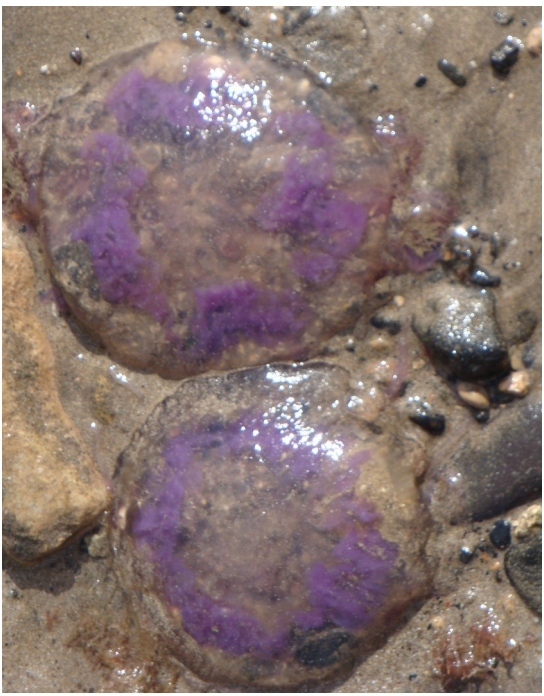
Sedate swimmer with tentacles behind. Small eyes. Can change colour for camouflage. Cuttlebones often found on the shore

Mauve stinger jellyfish

Aguaviva

Pelagia noctiluca

Up to 10cm diameter



Can arrive in plagues. Violet or pink. Tentacles can be very long their sting is unpleasant but short lasting – treat with vinegar

Sea anemone

Anémone de mar
Actiniaria viridis
Up to 3cm

Green tentacles with pink tips. Brushing tentacles can produce a rash

Sea tomato

Tomate de mar
Actinia equina
Up to 6cm

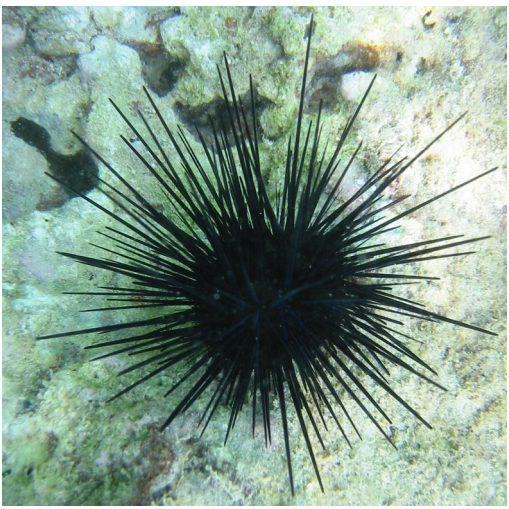
Bright red, closed in the day, opens at night. Can survive in inter-tidal zones – looks like a blob of jelly

Long-spined sea urchin

Eriza

Diadema antillarum

Up to 50cm



Sharp spines fall off when urchin dies leaving the shell, called test. Not eaten

Purple sea urchin

Erizo cachero

Paracentrotus lividus

Up to 15cm

Spines purplish-black, much smaller than the long-spined urchin. Test very similar.

Edible

Sea cucumber

Pepino de mar

Holothuria sp

Up to 30cm

Wide variety of species, varying shapes and colours. Some exude a white sticky liquid that is hard to remove

Sea squirt

Ascidia

Tunicata sp

Up to 10cm – possibly 60cm

Usually attached to rocks, expels out siphoned water through blow hole. Wide variety of shapes and sizes

Warty crab

Jaca peluda

Eriphia verrucosa

13cm shell

Hairy legs. Very tasty and much sought after. *Can be caught with bait* wrapped in a ball of rough thread, which tangles up their claws

White crab

Cangrejo blanco

Plagusia depressa

Up to 5cm

Flat shell covered in grey hairs. Shell and legs red with black spots, shell slightly wider than long

Red rock crab

“Sally lightfoot”
Cangrejo Moro
Grapsus adscensionis
8cm shell

Sit on wet rocks producing bubbles to keep their gills moist.
Very variable in colour but adults have red claws and legs. Extremely shy and will retreat into their holes as soon as you get closer than a few metres. Young crabs are dark brown or black

Nimble spray crab

“Sally lightfoot”
Araña plana
Percnon gibbesi
Up to 3cm shell

Legs have distinctive yellow bands at joints. Both this and the bigger red rock crab are nicknamed “Sally lightfoot” because of their speed when alarmed

Mottled shore crab

Juyon

Pachygrapsus transversus

Up to 2cm

Very small crab caught as bait. Green striped shell. Moves very quickly. Local name means “one who flees”

Hermit crab

Ermitano

Clibanarius aequabilis

Up to 3cm

Inhabits empty shell of gastropod mollusc. Changes to larger shell as it grows

Rams horn squid

Espírula

Spirula spirula

Up to 5cm

The shell of a small squid often washed up on beaches. The live animal is rarely seen as it inhabits the deep ocean

Purple sea snail

Concha violeta

Janthina janthina

Up to 4cm

Lives attached to floating seaweed. Shells washed ashore after storms

Sea snail

Caracolillo

Echinolittorina striata

5-15mm

Tiny sea snail found on rocks near the waterline. Common in Los Molinos

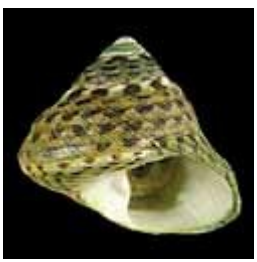
Periwinkle

Burgado comun, macho

Osilinus astratus, sauciatus

Up to 35mm

comun



macho

Edible winkle. Comun has white tip to shell, macho is much rarer

Whelk

Cañadilla

Stramonita haemastoma

Up to 12cm

Thick-walled shell with nodules and spiral lines. Colour variable, and may be covered in algae. Generally lives below low tide line

Canary clam

Almeja del pais
Haliotis tuberculata coccinea
Up to 10cm

Ear-shaped reddish-brown shell with white spots and pearly inside with line of small oval holes. Often attached to underside of stones by a limpet-like foot. Common in Pozo Negro, but protected

Brown mussel

Mejillon
Perna perna
Up to 12cm

Commonly found on the seashore, edible but collection restricted. Shops and restaurants more often sell the black mussel, *mytulus edulis*

Fuerteventuran limpet

Lapa majorera

Patella candei

Up to 8cm

Five other species of limpet are found on Fuerteventura, but none are as good to eat. Collection restricted. Easily removed with a sharp knife, if surprised. Characterised by grey or yellowish very high cone with clear centre, smaller ones greenish black. Endemic

Goose barnacle

Percebe

Pollicipes pollicipes

10cm stalk, 5 cm shell

Clings in large groups to wave beaten rocks near low tide level or to floating driftwood. Long stalk with smaller shell at tip. Red lips Sometimes seen in shops as an expensive delicacy. Boil briefly in salted water, twist off skin of stalk and eat centre. Discard shell

False barnacle

Cirrípedo

Lepas anatifera

10cm stalk, 5 cm shell

Clings in large groups to wave beaten rocks near low tide level or to floating driftwood. Long stalk with smaller shell at tip. Yellow lips. Edible, but not as tasty as percebe

Azorean barnacle

Claca

Megabalanus azoricus

Up to 2cm

Conical limestone shell with small opening at top like a crater. Usually found very firmly attached to rocks battered by the sea. Hard to remove. Good to eat but collection restricted